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Robert S. Craft

**Council**

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Carolyn Doughty, Place 2  
Philip Harris, Place 3  
Jason Dyken, Place 4  
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***From the Mayor's Desk***

April 12, 2010

This past year has been one of critical analysis resulting in major changes for the City. The Council and Staff have worked tirelessly to reinvent itself to meet the challenges posed by past hurricane events and the significant economic downturn. To include our citizens in this makeover, we have held 7 area neighborhood meetings throughout the City to get your input for a better Gulf Shores.

You told us that you were concerned about cleanliness of the beach so we have taken an entirely new approach to protecting our beaches including safety measures for recreational sports, additional staff for lifeguarding and beach cleanup, automated parking to improve traffic flow, and more beach patrols to ensure safety and cleanliness.

You also told us you wanted more bike and walking trails and thus we have a project started for a new addition to the State Park Trail extending it all the way to Hwy. 59 and are adding more sidewalks around Meyer Park and the elementary schools.

Following the retirement of several valued long term department heads, the City has reorganized our municipal structure. Well qualified people were hired into key positions including the new City Administrator, the Director of Finance and Administration and new Director of Recreation and Cultural Affairs. The reorganization has allowed the City to refine and improve the scale and breadth of leadership, gaining efficiency and a fresh approach to these critical areas. Despite these new hires, the number of city employees has been reduced by more than 15%, reducing personnel expenses. Money has been saved as a result.

Perhaps the most consistent message to come out of the neighborhood meetings was the major concern related to the \$13,000,000 FEMA liability for Ivan and Katrina. This was finally resolved and the City has been notified by FEMA that we are in compliance with expenses paid by FEMA for disaster recovery for these events. The liability has been removed.

Citizens will see the impact of the new staff including a new focus on our treasured beach front activities and physical environment, our new financial policy and refined efforts for tax revenue assessment and collection policies. Read on for more details from all of our Management Staff to find out more about what we are doing to improve the community.

The neighborhood meetings were conducted in an effort to prepare a 5-year strategic plan with your input. Because of your input we are well on the way.

Remember to continue to let us know what you think and check out the new City website for ongoing updates: <http://www.gulfshoresal.gov/>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Craft", written over a light background.

Mayor Robert

## *City of Gulf Shores*

### *From the Desk of Steve Garman*

April 12, 2010

Citizens & Visitors of Gulf Shores:

It has been a unique pleasure and challenge to serve as your city administrator for the last eighteen months. Arriving in the fall of 2008, we found "the perfect storm" on the horizon.

Virtually upon my arrival Gulf Shores the American economy began a nose dive, and with it the revenues of the city. The earlier recessionary signs could not be ignored. Our beach community was not immune to the dramatic income reduction occurring in all facets of our economy. The high flying expansion of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was at an end. New growth was, for the moment, dead.

As disquieting as these events were, the major threat that took full form that fall was the realization that the city had a potential liability of \$13,000,000 due to an audit of FEMA expenses incurred in reconstruction efforts from IVAN and KATRINA. The reality became clear....not only did city expenses remain unrealistically high, but revenues were expected to be dramatically reduced and an unfunded liability of \$10,000,000 (the city had \$3,000,000 in reserves) was now on the balance sheet. The perfect storm was at the door.

In November of that year a new Mayor and City Council took office. The city budget year was changed to a calendar year and the operating budget was reduced from \$28,000,000 to \$24,000,000. All bond funds were frozen to be later reviewed. These changes required a complete restructuring of the city organization, from 16 departments to 8. A reduction in force went through each city department. Throughout 2009 the Mayor and City Council and all department heads diligently watched all expenses and monitored all income. It was a tenuous, difficult process.

In 2009, however, most of the collective attention of city officials went toward resolving the FEMA emergency. It was daily and stressful.

By the years end, the FEMA liability had been reduced to \$9,000,000. Expenditures had been held in check and good summer weather resulted in a prosperous tourist season. In early 2010, the FEMA liability was resolved by a reduction to \$1,300,000, from \$13,000,000. New financial management policies were in place (see finance section of this report), in order to better deal with future tropical and financial issues.

By the spring of 2010 a new city organization had emerged. The city had "right sized" itself and new department heads were recruited to replace several valuable long term employees who had retired. Through an intense effort, Mayor and City Council oversight and dedication of city employees and department heads, the storm was avoided.

A smaller, more focused and sustainable city organization has developed.



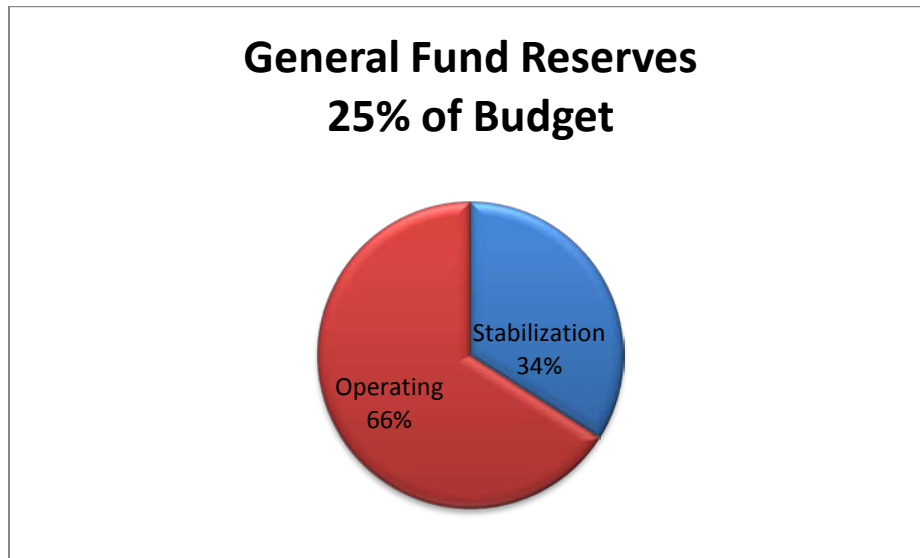
Steve Garman  
City Administrator

# *City of Gulf Shores*

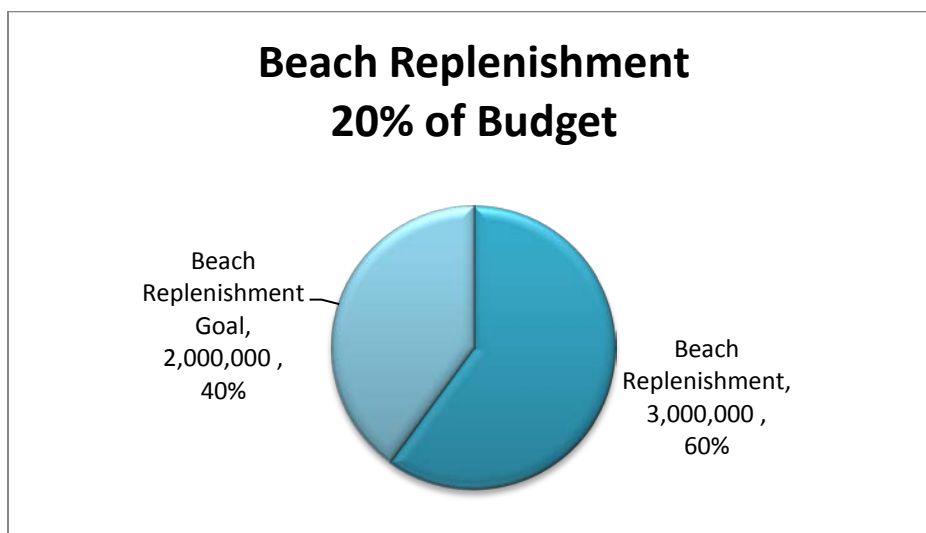
## *New Financial Policies & Strategy*

### **Stabilization Funds & Beach Replenishment Reserve Funds**

The City of Gulf Shores will build through prudent financial management a cash reserve equal to twenty-five per cent of the General Fund Operating Budget. The General Fund Stabilization Reserve will enable the city to withstand fluctuations in tourism revenue streams related to the nearby travel industry and provide a stabilized fiscal environment to maintain and enhance bond ratings allowing the city to borrow at competitive rates. Of the twenty-five per cent General Fund reserves, two-thirds will be maintained as an Operating Reserve to enable the City to continue operations in the event of an emergency or disaster until other funds may be received.



A Beach Replenishment Reserve Fund target of twenty-percent of the General Fund budget for 2010 would be five million. Currently \$3,000,000 is in the General Fund (Emergency Public Safety Reserves). An additional \$2,000,000 will be added to the Beach Replenishment Reserve Fund as the funds can be designated.



## *City of Gulf Shores More From the Staff*

### **from recreation & cultural affairs.....Grant Brown, director**

***The new beach....***Additional emphasis is being placed on the beach and the beach area, understanding that as our City's greatest asset, it is imperative we keep the beaches clean and safe. New ordinances have been passed; the "Beach Patrol" has expanded by adding roving patrols to aid in the enforcement of the rules, increasing the response time for people in distress; new lifeguard stands are in place for the season and have expanded to include the Little Lagoon Pass; new parking pay stations have been installed; and the Police Department, along with the contracted security firm, have a consistent presence. Overall, a heightened awareness and attention to the beach is a top priority.

***Recreation and cultural affairs....***A new Recreation and Cultural Affairs department has been created which combines Parks and Recreation with Special Events. Combining these areas will allow there to be more crossover between the City's Events and Programs, expanding the types of activities being offered to residents.

***Parks....***Improving and maintaining the City's Parks continues to be a high priority as can be seen with the newly completed Lagoon Park, complete with a boat launch. Offering recreational opportunities for the residents continues to be a high priority within the City.

### **from planning & zoning.....Andy Bauer, director**

***Rethinking Gulf Place....***while retaining those elements coming out of Envision Gulf Shores is underway. Two new parking areas along the beach adjacent to Gulf Place are planned and one will be under construction this summer. A new two acre parcel directly across from the public beach has been acquired by the City and will be used for overflow parking until the vision for the new Gulf Place is complete. These initiatives were high on the wish list of residents.

***Overlay zoning districts....***are designed to address specific issues that are not appropriate to a specific zoning district or that apply to several districts, e.g. short term rental of houses. The City recently approved a Single Family & Duplex Tourist Rental Overlay District for a portion of West Beach and a portion of the properties located on the northern shore of the Little Lagoon. This was a direct result of input gained from the affected neighborhoods.

***East Gulf Shores....***The City is aware of citizen requests to preserve the character of East Gulf Shores. East Gulf Shores is populated with many older houses and businesses. With zoning changes such as an overlay district the character of East Gulf Shores can be preserved all the while encouraging future growth that is compatible and an improvement to the neighborhood's residential small business nature. Further, we are working with ALDOT in hopes of developing an alternate alignment for Canal Road.

## *City of Gulf Shores More From the Staff*

**from public works.....Mark Acreman, director**

***Drainage and litter was a common theme raised at several meetings....***Public Works has a work crew that performs ongoing maintenance on City ditches and has contracted services to cleanout clogged culverts.

Residential and commercial trash collection is mandatory by City Ordinance, and illegal dumping is punishable by a \$500 fine. Enforcing this was a high priority from the neighborhood meetings. If anyone knows of households that do not have garbage service or see illegal dumping please contact the City. If a business, subdivision or individual would like to adopt a City street to help with litter please contact the Streets Division at 251-968-1448.

***Little Lagoon Pass....***The neighborhoods around Little Lagoon are rightly concerned about the pass. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is currently developing a new design and maintenance plan for the Little Lagoon Pass and Bridge that addresses water quality and sand management for the Pass.

***Mosquito spraying....***Public Works sprays for mosquitoes three nights a week from spring until fall. We use only EPA mosquito control approved products. Public Works has, free of charge, larvicide tablets that we give to residents to treat standing water on their properties. If you are a citizen and would like to receive free larvicide tablets please contact the Streets Division at 251-968-1448.

***Sidewalks and bike paths....***In addition to that mentioned in the Mayor's letter, the City has been awarded a Safe Routes to School Grant from ALDOT and intends to construct sidewalks around Meyer Park and improve the connectivity to the school bike paths. Public Works has contracted bike path sweeping and will be resurfacing and restriping several bike paths that are part of our roadway system. Public Works is evaluating the need for benches and parking along the Fort Morgan Bike Trail.

***City streets and state highways....***In the current budget, based on your input, the city has allotted \$500,000 for resurfacing of the most critical needs roads. The Mayor and Council passed a resolution endorsing the County's proposed extension of the Foley Beach Express to Interstates 10 & 65 to reduce traffic congestion and provide an additional hurricane evacuation route.

The City has conveyed to ALDOT citizen requests to widen Hwy 59 and Hwy 180 (Ft. Morgan Road) and is currently working with ALDOT to improve access management along Hwy 59 and at Wal-Mart.

***Traffic and signalization....***is always a topic of discussion so we are working with ALDOT to add dual left-turn signals at County road 4 and Hwy 59 to expedite traffic movements during peak times and in preparation of the opening of the Publix shopping center. Off-season programs are implemented after the summer season and are more balanced for the lower traffic volumes so that wait times on East/West roadways are reduced. The City is working with ALDOT to improve crosswalk safety by improving the crosswalk markings along the beach highway. The City in conjunction with Baldwin EMC has added hundreds of new streetlights over the past three years.

As always, call us at the above number with any problems or questions.

*City of Gulf Shores*  
*More From the Staff*

**from the building department.....Brandan Franklin, *building official***

***Residential maintenance is a persistent issue on the mind of many citizens....***The City has ordinances in place to regulate the use of residential lots. These ordinances require lots to be maintained, the number of unrelated persons allowed in a dwelling, and the code requirements for structures. The percent of damage to a structure is determined by the cost of repair to the pre-damaged market value of a house. Once the City is notified of a damaged structure, the owner is given thirty days to obtain a permit to bring the structure into compliance. Currently, based on your comments, we are examining the legal option to force reluctant property owners to comply with codes.

**from the police department.....Fred Beaman, *chief***

***Public safety....***The police department always strives to make all of our streets and beaches safe for our citizens and visitors. It is our goal to be proactive in all aspects of law enforcement. If a problem area is identified we will deploy our resources to that area. That could be extra patrol to combat motorist exceeding the speed limit or routine patrol on the beach with our ATV's. We will respond accordingly to all concerns.

***Speed limit enforcement....***If the problem is with vehicles exceeding the speed limit we will actively work radar in that area, both visibly and covertly. We will also utilize our radar trailer.

***New technology....***New digital cameras, about half the size of a pager and worn on an officers shirt will be issued to all patrol personnel. These devices record everything said and done during interaction between an officer and a citizen and will prove invaluable in lawsuit issues, complaints from citizens and investigations. Gulf Shores is apparently of the first cities in Alabama to order these innovative new cameras, though we will not be the only one.

**from the fire department.....Hartley Brokenshaw, *chief***

***New fire station....***The members of the Gulf Shores Fire Rescue (GSFR) have been working tirelessly on the new fire station #3. Our staff members are remodeling this station in between responses to emergencies, training and other calls for assistance. GSFR members have met many new friends and are looking forward to being "good neighbors" in this area of Gulf Shores.

This station is located directly across from Lagoon Park (formerly known as Moe's Landing). This will be the third fully staffed station for GSFR. We anticipate this station will be up and running within 5 months. We are planning an open house to celebrate this great addition to our community.

## *An Update from Gulf Shores Utilities Board*

Over the past six years, the Gulf Shores Utilities Board completed over \$20 million of capital improvements to include additional water and sewer lines, sewer lift station upgrades, water storage, water production, and a new water treatment plant. These improvements were designed to improve our current water and sewer service, prepare the system for potential natural disasters, and accommodate future development.

Our Wastewater Reclamation Facility is permitted to discharge 4.0 million gallons per day (mgd). Currently, our annual average daily discharge rate is approximately 1.47 mgd, or 37% of capacity. Based upon our customer base of approximately 9,000 residential units, we have available service capacity for 4,000 to 5,000 additional residential units before upgrades to expand our capacity are necessary.

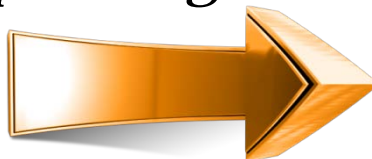
The Board also substantially expanded our water production capabilities over the past several years. Since Hurricane Ivan, the Board has constructed water well #10 with a daily capacity of 1.44 mgd, water well #11 which has been permitted for 2.88 mgd, and water treatment plant #4. With these most recent additions, the Board now has the capability of producing 9.72 million gallons of potable water each day. In addition, the Board has 7.25 million gallons of tank storage to augment our daily production. Our annual average daily usage is 3.1 mgd, with a peak daily demand of approximately 6.0 mgd and, with a current customer base of approximately 16,000 residential units, we estimate capacity for an additional 5,000 to 6,000 residential units before the need arises to construct additional water production facilities.

The Board takes seriously the needs of this community for water production and wastewater treatment and is committed to insuring that these resources will be available in the future. For example, the Wastewater Reclamation Facility has been designed to permit expansion of its capacity to 6.0 mgd with only moderate improvements that could be completed within 15 to 20 months. Over the long-term, this facility has the potential to be expanded to approximately 12 mgd.

Our water resources are also critical to the future growth of our community. An extensive study of our water aquifers has revealed a vast quantity of ground water that is not now being extracted. The Board is continuing to study these aquifers through the services of a professional geologist and by monitoring wells strategically located throughout our service area. Initial results strongly enforce our confidence that our water resources will be available and sufficient for future generations to come.

We will continue to examine the needs of the community and improve our infrastructure to ensure that our residents experience a quality of service that meets the quality of life they expect along the Gulf Coast. Should you have a situation that requires our attention or you have questions about service availability, please give us a call at 968-6323.

*Check out the New  
City of Gulf Shores Website  
for the latest news, developments, and  
upcoming events!*



[www.gulfshoresal.gov](http://www.gulfshoresal.gov)



# Gulf Shores ALABAMA

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## Visitors



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WHAT'S  
NEW?

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## Residents



## A Word From the Mayor...

[Mayor's State of the City Address](#)

**Mayor Robert Craft**



*As Mayor of the City of Gulf Shores, I welcome you to the Alabama Gulf Coast. In Gulf Shores, our pleasant climate, natural beauty, and Southern Hospitality unite to form what visitors and residents fondly call "Pleasure Island". Please enjoy your visit, and we look forward to your return.*

*Gulf Shores...A Water Way of Life*

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*City Council*